

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre presents:

A stylized graphic featuring a dark, thick line that forms a triangular shape, resembling a picnic basket handle. Two large, dark, shaded spheres are positioned at the base of the triangle, one on the left and one on the right. The word "Picnic" is written in a large, elegant, cursive script across the center of the graphic, with the handle line passing through the letters.

Picnic

By William Inge

Nov. 12-14, 2004
at 8PM

Nov. 19-20, 2004
at 8PM

Nov. 21, 2004
at 2PM

*Faculty of the Department of
Speech Communication & Theatre*

Arlene Badura
Maria Beach
Eric Beaven
James N. Brown
Kenneth Danielson
Liz Emmert
Johanna Forte
Ronald Graspy
Jill Hildebrandt
Diane Jensen
Deryl Johnson
Milton Kern
Kym Kleinsmith
David Lambkin
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Andrea Mitnick
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College of Visual & Performing Arts

*Kutztown University's production of PICNIC is a participating entry in
the Kennedy Center/ American College Theatre Festival.*

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Department of Speech Communication & Theatre
Presents

Picnic
By
William Inge

November 12-14, 19-20
At 8:00pm
&
November 21
At 2:00pm

Director
Roxane Rix

Sound Design
Josh DeLong

Scenic & Lighting Design
Robert L. Smith

Stage Manager
Tom Birch

Costume Design
Johanna Forte

Dramaturg
Maria Beach

Photographs & recording devices are **prohibited** during the
performance.
Please **silence all** pagers, cell phones, & other electronic devices.
Thank You!

*Produced by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc.*

Cast List

In order of appearance

Helen Potts.....	Joanna Stevens
Hal Carter.....	Jamie Mohamdein
Millie Owens.....	Jennifer Kurtz
Bomber.....	Charles Knecht
Madge Owens.....	Jennifer Newby
Flo Owens.....	Laura Byrne
Rosemary Sydney.....	Becca Serra
Irma Kronkite.....	Tara Mitchell
Christine Shoenwaller.....	Cara Sheridan
Alan Seymour.....	Christopher Dickerson
Howard Bevins.....	Brian Walsh
Additional Voice.....	Tiffany Dow
Additional Voice.....	Adam Kissinger

Setting

A shared yard on the outskirts of Independence, Kansas
September 1952

Act I

Early Morning

Act II

Late that afternoon

Act III

Scene 1: The next day, some time before dawn

Scene 2: Later that morning

There will be a ten-minute intermission between each Act.

Director's Note

1952: *Ozzie and Harriet* debuted, Mr. Potato Head was introduced (you supplied the potato), and singers such as Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, and Johnnie Ray still dominated the popular radio charts.

Interstate highways had not yet reached small near-western towns such as Independence, Kansas, where outlying roads were still unpaved and the occasional horse-drawn wagon might mingle with the Packards; men down on their luck still hopped freight trains in search of a better life and occasionally showed up at the back door offering labor for a meal. Clothes were mostly homemade, bought at the local dry goods store, or ordered through the Montgomery ("Monkey") Ward catalogue. Schoolteachers were overwhelmingly single females, who, in Kansas and other states, were still required to "retire" upon marriage. Owning a television set was not yet common; home entertainment meant singing, playing the piano, or dancing outside to the radio, a favorite teen pastime. The big community events were ice cream socials, county fairs, dances at the Grange, and, for holidays during the warm months, picnics in the park where the local band would play.

Adults in 1952 had endured loss of loved ones and real daily sacrifices through the Great Depression and WWII, a bonding of American identity which, in the period of postwar prosperity, led to a passion for the safety of conformity; "fitting in" was of prime importance. Women who had worn trousers to the factories during the war were encouraged back into dresses and the job of being the perfect wife for a husband whose home was to be his castle. Women's magazines were about cooking, managing a household, entertaining the husband's business associates, and the importance of having hair and makeup always in place (alongside cautionary short fiction about women who failed to heed such valuable advice; passing reference assumed, of course, that any decent woman had not given herself away before marriage). Women were supposed to civilize men: the romantic notion of "beauty taming the beast" was in full flower. The pulse of women's independence that had been quickened in the war years was supposed to be directed again into the home. Yet – certainly for granddaughters of pioneers who had

Director's Note Continued

made it across the Mississippi and founded towns with names like Independence – the pulse remained unquiet.

This is the world of William Inge's *Picnic*. Though he sets the play in no particular year (and anachronisms abound), the social realities he portrays are both firmly set in the late '40s/early '50s, and recognizable for their enduring influence in our culture. His people are the small-town Kansans he (and I) knew in childhood, but his insights into human nature are beyond time and place. Inge gets at the deep contradiction in our impulses to be free as individuals and safe in the bonds of mating, family, and community; how we unconsciously reveal uncomfortable truths about ourselves despite our efforts to fit (or redefine) the role society has decreed for us; and the way we may blindly devote ourselves to something – a romance, a job, a particular image in the community – not truly for the thing itself, but in a drive to satisfy some deep, inarticulate yearning.

It is September 8, 1952, in Independence, Kansas. Everyone's looking forward to the annual Labor Day picnic, blissfully unaware of how their lives are about to change.

Dramaturg's Note

1952 shares some similarities to our own era. The United States detonated the first hydrogen bomb in 1952—a device far more powerful than the atomic bombs that had ended WWII—giving the US the greatest weapon of mass destruction the world had ever known. But despite our military strength, Americans lived in fear: fear of nuclear attack by the Soviet Union, fear of encroaching communism. We were fighting the Korean War to try to keep what we viewed as a dangerous ideology at bay, and people worried that bombs might explode in America at any time. The election of 1952 pitted a liberal Democrat against a conservative Republican. “I like Ike” was a winning slogan for the Republican Eisenhower, who won the election. His administration, like the early 1950s in general, stressed a return to traditional values. Conformity was widespread.

In some respects, though, the early fifties were profoundly different from our times. Kansas was more progressive regarding race relations than many other states; however, the 1954 Supreme Court decision “*Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*” that outlawed so-called “separate but equal” schools for white and African American children addressed what was then standard practice in Kansas and most other places: segregation. Interracial dating was highly unusual, and most people lived in neighborhoods separated according to race. In our production, we have tried to realistically depict many aspects of life in 1952 Kansas. However, we have used the modern practice of colorblind casting, or casting actors according to talent rather than ethnicity. Our multiracial cast might seem to embody historical anachronisms in a play set over a half-century ago, but in 2004, students need to be able to compete on equal footing for roles in university plays.

1952 was also a regressive time for women. Most women had a limited number of low-paying occupations open to them: teacher, nurse, secretary. Women who were ill-equipped for these jobs might, like Madge in *Picnic*, work as dime store clerks, waitresses in diners, or take in laundry. None of these jobs offered any hope of advancement. Newspapers advertised jobs under headings like “Help Wanted: Female,” and “Help Wanted: Male.” There was little equality of opportunity for women. Most women expected their

Dramaturg's Note Continued

security to come from marrying well, and there was enormous pressure for young women to "catch" a suitable mate as soon as possible after finishing high school. In *Picnic*, both Flo and Mrs. Potts married for love, but neither marriage was successful. Flo wants a better life for her daughters, and since Madge is "the pretty one," she assumes that Madge's looks will be her ticket to a good lifestyle. Millie is smart, plans to go to college, and dreams of becoming a writer. Perhaps more than any other character in the play, Millie's aspirations mirror those of the playwright, William Inge. As a young man, Inge longed to leave his small-town and make his living as an author.

Inge finally found success as a writer in his thirties and forties. From 1950-57 he had four major plays on Broadway, and all were made into feature films. For a time, his work was compared favorably to other major playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, and *Picnic* won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Inge's plays revolve around ordinary people, their dreams, their frustrations, and their desires. In *Picnic*, many types of desire are depicted: the desire for change or to belong; a yearning to leave the confines of small-town life or a determination to "bloom where you are planted;" the desire to be seen as a whole person rather than just a pretty face or a muscle man; the need for love, companionship, and human connection; and sexual desire. Although Inge's success as a writer may seem to be the fulfillment of his dreams, he was never happy with what he had achieved, and suffered from severe depression. Although he called *Picnic* "a summer romance," it is a play that is hard to categorize according to genre. *Picnic* is a love story that seems to be about ordinary folks in a simpler, bygone age, but it also has darker elements. In his original version, the play ended on a more ambiguous, less happy note, but Inge was persuaded by director Joshua Logan to change the ending. In the play, as in life, most people's lives are neither fully tragic nor a happily-ever-after fairy tale. Real life is messy and complicated and Inge's characters are complex and realistic.

Production Crew

Stage Manager

Tom Birch

Assistant Stage Managers

Amanda Kimble

Adam Kissinger

Box Office Manager

Kristen Scatton

House Manager

Elizabeth Yoder

Sound Board Operator

Joe Gushen

Light Board Operator

Nathan Matz

Electrics

Amanda Eastriday

Publicity & Promotion

Tara Mitchell

Prop Procurement

Michael Kneeream

Prop Running

Julianne Remus

Tad Schlegel

Scene Shop Assistants

Eric DeMarco

Jonathon Greco

Adam Kissinger

Michael Kneeream

Scenery

Emily Bahlinger

Maria Bernardo

Matthew Burns

Laura Byrne

Syreeta Hill

Ryan Kern

Robert F. Mitchell

Lisa St. Amand

Tad Schlegel

Jennifer Sible

Assistants to the Designer

Rebeka Schaffer

Terri Tobin

Hair Design

Johanna Forte

Marge Emerich

Make-up Designer

Jessica Johnson

Assistant to the Make-up

Designer

Maria Barbardo

Production Crew Continued

Dressers

Gregory Davis
Tiffany Dow

Make-up Crew

Greg Allen
Judy Martens

Costume Crew

Jennifer Newby
Tom Birch
Lauren Bittenbush
James Corrado
Evangeline Joy Galliford
Jennifer Sible
Joanna Stevens
Marissa Williams

Hairstyles Executed By

Marge Emerich

Dancing Coach

Christopher Dickerson

***Kutztown University Theatre gratefully acknowledges the support
of the following individuals and local businesses in mounting this
production:***

*~Marge Emerich & Zimar Hair Fashions~
Main Street, Kutztown*

*~Chachka's Antiques & Junque~
Rte. 222, Kutztown*

*~Antique Complex of Fleetwood~
Rte. 222, Fleetwood*

~Bob Reinecke for headshots & website design~

~Jessica Shultz for poster & program cover design~

~Mike Scales for Piano Music~

Student Bios.

Thomas Birch (Stage Manager) is returning for his second year stage managing Kutztown University's main stage production. He had his début last spring for Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* & was the assistant stage manager for G.B. Shaw's *Arms & the Man*.

Laura Byrne (Flo Owens) is making her Mainstage début at Kutztown University as a sophomore theatre major. Laura played the Cowardly Lion in the Sunshine Player's production of *Oz!* during the spring 2004 semester. Other productions include *Top Girls*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Lucky Stiff*, & *The Pajama Game*.

Christopher Dickerson (Seymour/Choreographer) has crewed for KU production's of *Arms & the Man* & *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and h choreographed last spring's *The Threepenny Opera*. *Picnic*, Dickerson's Mainstage début also displays his choreography. His past performances include Roscoe the Grouch in the Sunshine Player's production of *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs*. Dickerson also participates in organizations such as Housing & Residence Life, After-Hours, & the University Choir.

Charles Knecht (Bomber) is a freshman at Kutztown University. His past theatre experience includes performances in *The Wizard of Oz*, *Big*, & *Honk*. *Picnic* will be his first KU Mainstage performance.

Jennifer Kurtz (Millie Owens) is making her fourth appearance on the KU Mainstage. Her previous performances include *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Alice & Wonderland*, & *The Threepenny Opera*. Most recently, Jennifer was cast in the White Rose Productions Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre in Catasauqua.

Tara Mitchell (Irma Kronkite) is a sophomore making her KU Theatre début. Along with appearing in high school theatre productions, Mitchell anchored its daily news program. She has also worked with Conversions, an independent repertory theatre, been a regular panelist on the *Rick Williams Saturday Morning Show*, & appeared as an extra in M. Night Shanalanynes *Unbreakable*.

Jamie Mohamdein (Hal Carter), a freshman theatre major, will make his Mainstage début in *Picnic*. His previous theatre experience consists of primarily musicals, including *My Fair Lady*, *Mame*, & *Scrooge*. He also played the role of Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes*.

Student Bios Continued

Jennifer Newby (Madge Owens) is a senior theatre major. She will be graduating December 2004 with *Picnic* as her final University performance. Her previous performances include the title character in the Sunshine Player's *Willabella Witch's Last Spell*, Raina Petkoff in a fall 2003 Mainstage performance of *Arms & the Man*, and the role of Dolly in a spring 2004 performance of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Rebecca Serra (Rosemary Sydney), senior theatre major, is returning to the KU mainstage after her role as Filch on the production *The Threepenny Opera*. Serra has also played the part of Meg Brockie in *Brigadoon* & the part of Katherine in *Taming of the Shrew*.

Cara Sheridan (Christine Shoenwalter) has been acting since the young age of ten. She appeared in many high school productions as well as several productions at the Civic Theatre in Allentown. *Picnic* will be Sheridan's first KU Mainstage production.

Joanna Stevens (Helen Potts) is returning for her second Mainstage appearance. Her previous roles include the part of Miss Pringle in *Baby with the Bathwater* in fall 2002, *Cootie Shots*, and TweedleDee & the Caterpillar the Sunshine Players production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Stevens has also participated in the Children's Show on Diversity, the Children's Theatre Touring Company, & KU's vocal jazz ensemble.

Brian Walsh (Howard Bevans) is a senior Theatre Major. *Picnic* is Brian's second appearance on the KU Mainstage. He was previously seen as Horace in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Walsh also serves as the President of the Sunshine Player's Children's Theatre Company here at KU and is currently directing their production of *Aladdin*, which will open in December (2004). Walsh has acted & directed in a number of Sunshine Player productions.

Faculty Bios

Professor Roxane Rix (Director), since joining the theatre faculty at Kutztown in fall of 2001, has directed for KU Theater *The Seagull*, *Iphigeneia At Aulis*, & *The Threepenny Opera*, which won an award for Ensemble from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region II.

Professor Rix, has won awards for her directing of university productions & presented numerous national workshops for actors & acting teachers. Her publications include articles & a book chapter on her specialty, Alba Emoting, a new, non-psychological technique for emotional freedom for actors. She also holds office in the Association for Theatre in Higher Education & is active in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival as a production respondent & scholarship auditions judge. Professor Rix holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Minnesota, a Certificate in Acting & Directing from Sonia Moore's American Stanislavski Theatre, & Level 4 Certification in Alba Emoting.

Professor Maria Beach (Dramaturg) is a faculty member at Kutztown University who began her training in dramaturgy as a graduate student at Villanova University and worked as an assistant to the literary manager of the Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays. She served as a dramaturg for nine productions at the University of Texas at Austin and Southwestern University, with a particular emphasis on contemporary plays by female dramatists. Since coming to Kutztown has been the dramaturg for *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and *The Threepenny Opera*, and will also be the dramaturg for next semester's *Comedy of Errors*.

Faculty Bios Continued

Professor Johanna Forte (Costume Designer) has been an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Kutztown since 1987. Originally from Michigan, Professor Forte came to KU with a wide range of professional experience, including designing at Meadow Brook Theatre, SUNY Purchase, two years as a resident costumer at Allentown's PA Stage Company, & assisting New York-based costume designers. The Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival has recognized Professor Forte for her costume designs in *Crimes of the Heart*, *The Lion in Winter*, & *All My Sons*, among others. Presently, she is the faculty advisor for the Sunshine Players. Professor Forte's most recent KU productions include Lanford Wilson's *The Hotel Baltimore*, Robert Brustein's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, & *Arms & the Man*. She resides in Bowers, PA with her husband, Randall, & their two children, Melina & Byron.

Professor Robert Lewis Smith (Scenic & Lighting Designer) has spent thirty-plus years teaching design & designing for academic theatres in New York, Virginia, Maryland, & Washington. Before coming to KU, Professor Smith designed scenery for Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre in Missouri, where he designed the set for Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Other professional credits include designs for New York's AMAS Musical Theatre, The New Dramatists, Westbeth Theatre, Syracuse Stage (formally known as the Syracuse Repertory Theatre), the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, Theatre Center Philadelphia, the Jersey Lyric Opera, & the New Jersey Ballet. KU Mainstage credits: *Rhinoceros*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Olympus on My Mind*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Hotel Baltimore*, *The Seagull*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, & *Arms & the Man*.



The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival™
XXXVII

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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels. Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2005. Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.